

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1-3 have been amended. Support for the amendment to claim 1 can be found in page 6, Table 3 of the specification, support for the amendment to claim 2 can be found in page 5, Table 2 of the specification, and support for the amendment to claim 3 can be found in page 7, Table 5 of the specification. No new matter is added.

Claims 1-3¹ are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Japanese Patent Publication No. 2002-201082 to Ichikawa in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,354,991 to Suzuki and Japanese Patent Publication No. 61-026565 to Kani. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1, as amended, now recites a formed body which includes a metal silicon raw material is fired in a "protective container made of silicon carbide in which a solid containing aluminum is placed, wherein the solid containing aluminum is placed such that a separation distance from the body to be fired is equal to or below 50 cm." Ichikawa, Suzuki, nor Kani disclose this feature of claim 1. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 is respectfully requested.

Claim 2, as amended, now recites a formed body which includes a metal silicon raw material is fired in a "protective container made of silicon carbide in which a solid containing aluminum is placed, wherein the solid contains aluminum equal to or above 1% in terms of a weight composition ratio in oxide equivalent." Ichikawa, Suzuki, nor Kani disclose this feature of claim 2.

The Office Action alleges that Kani discloses that the quantity of Al in the aluminum containing substance should be from 0.01-5% by weight based on the weight of the SiC body. By contrast, claim 2 as amended, now recites that the solid contains "aluminum equal to or

¹ The detailed action states that claims 1-8 are rejected (see page 2 of the Office Action). Applicants assume this is a typographical error as only claims 1-3 are pending.

above 1% in terms of weight composition ratio in oxide equivalent." Kani does not disclose this feature. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection of claim 2 is respectfully requested.

Claim 3, as amended, now recites a formed body which includes a metal silicon raw material is fired in a "protective container made of silicon carbide in which a solid containing aluminum is placed, wherein the solid containing aluminum is composed of a fire-resistant block body having water absorption equal to or above 0.05%." Ichikawa, Suzuki, nor Kani disclose this feature of claim 3. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection of claim 3 is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-3 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:

Request for Continued Examination

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